

BUSINESS VOICE

ISSUE 182 | MARCH 2024



A PUBLICATION OF THE
RIDGECREST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BOARD CHAIR MESSAGE

2023-2024 Chamber OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

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Grocery Outlet

Debbie Benson

Chair Elect
Maturango Museum

Eric Le Barbé

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Nick Wakley

RAW Media Productions

Rebecca McCourt

Chamber Executive Director

Business Voice is a publication of the
Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce

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Issue 182 March 2024

March 2024

Spring has finally arrived, bringing with it a sense of renewal and excitement for the changes it brings to our beloved area. As the temperatures begin to climb and the landscape starts to awaken, there's an undeniable energy in the air—a promise of longer sunny days and warmer temperatures that make our region truly shine.

At the Chamber, March is a month of reflection and gratitude as we completed the 37th Annual IWV Economic Outlook Conference. The event was a resounding success, thanks to the dedication and hard work of our sponsors, speakers, emcee Tex Hoppus, the EOC committee, and all those working behind the scenes. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to everyone who contributed to making the conference a memorable and informative experience. Your support and participation are invaluable as we strive to provide events and resources that bring value to our members. If you attended and have not yet completed the feedback survey, please do so now at ridgecrestchamber.com/eoc-survey

As we transition from one event to the next, there's no shortage of excitement on the horizon. Keep an eye out as we launch our new community connections calendar, Yodel (events.yodel.today/ridgecrest). You can find out about upcoming Chamber and community events, including our monthly luncheons, ribbon cuttings, and networking opportunities. This platform thrives on community engagement, so check it out and let us know what questions you have!

I'm continually reminded of the profound impact we can collectively make on our community. Each volunteer hour, event attendance, local purchase, and act of kindness contributes to making Ridgecrest and its surrounding areas thrive. Let's continue to support one another, show pride in our town, and spread positivity wherever we go. Together, we can amplify our influence and create a brighter future for all. - Kristina

Kristina Cross



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CHAMBER LUNCHEON

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March 12 — The Lighthouse, Tara Packer and Jeanne Young

Join the Ridgecrest Chamber at the **Historic USO Building on Tuesday, March 12 at 12pm.** This month we will hear from Tara Packer and Jeanne Young of The Lighthouse and learn about the many ways they are making and impact in our community and in Kenya.



THE LIGHTHOUSE

Please RSVP by Friday, March 8, 2024 to the Chamber office
760-375-8331 or chamber@ridgecrestchamber.com

Lunch will be provided by Tacos and Burgers.

\$25 w/RSVP, \$30 for non-members or without an RSVP

The Historic USO Building is located at 230 W. Ridgecrest Blvd

Your Chamber
is dedicated to:

Building community

Strengthening the economy

Providing networking
opportunities

Representing the interest of
business to the government

Political action

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BUSINESS
VOICE

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(760) 446-2796

**1600 N. Norma, No. 4
Ridgecrest, CA 93555**



Official Notice - Chamber Board Elections

The Nominating Committee chaired by Chris Hill has met and selected **six** candidates to run for four positions on the Chamber Board of Directors. The term for these positions will be from July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2027. Each of these persons has agreed to serve if elected.

The nominees are (selected in random order from drawing of all nominees):

Brandon Temple – 760 Fitness/High Desert Fitness
Jeffrey Lenk – Cerro Coso Community College
Amanda Diamond – Liberty Ambulance
Janis Bottorff – Specialized Alternative Staffing Solutions (S.A.S.S.)
Kristina Cross – Grocery Outlet
Roger Ussery – AltaOne Federal Credit Union

As the bylaws stipulate, this notice notifies all voting Chamber members of the list of names of nominees. Nominations by petition may also be made according to the following bylaws procedure:

Additional names of candidates for Directors can be nominated by petition bearing the genuine signatures of at least twenty-five (25) qualified members of the Chamber. Such petitions shall be filed with the Nominating Committee within ten (10) days after notice of the names of those nominated has been mailed. The determination of the Nominating Committee as to the legality of the petition and the eligibility of the candidates shall be final.

Petitions must be received in the Chamber office, 128 E. California, Ste. B, by March 11, 2024. Ballots and voting instructions will be sent by March 18, 2024.

Polls will close at 5 p.m. on April 5, 2024.

At the April 11 meeting, the board will declare elected the four candidates with highest number of votes.

New board members will be Installed at the Meeting in June, seated at the June board meeting and will be eligible to vote July 1.

NEW MEMBERS

PowerMarket

Bringing Community Solar to Ridgecrest

This summer, Ridgecrest residents will directly benefit from the solar project currently being constructed next to the Inyokern Airport. But to realize these benefits, households

need to sign up to join the Inyokern Community Solar project. This is the first solar project of its kind that will allow local Ridgecrest households to actually participate and directly save each month without any solar panels installed on their roofs.

PowerMarket

PowerMarket is proud to be a member of the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce, as it was the Chamber's support that propelled the development of this local, clean energy project. "Rebecca and the Chamber have been instrumental in making this Inyokern Community Solar project a reality. Because this solar project is being built right here in the IWV, we want to make sure the benefits stay local and we are prioritizing the inclusion of residents in Ridgecrest. We're committed to not only generating clean energy locally, but to deliver meaningful energy cost savings to Ridgecrest residents and we hope they take the 6 minutes to join." - Jason Kaplan, COO of PowerMarket.

What is community solar? Community solar is a Green-e® Energy-certified program that is administered by Southern California Edison and allows you to take part in a renewable energy project in your community. It's also the easiest way to enjoy guaranteed savings on your monthly energy costs, without upfront costs or risks. It's a win-win! No solar panels are installed on your home. Instead, the project you support pumps clean energy into the grid, earning you credits towards your Southern California Edison bill. That's money right back in your pocket!

Here are a few benefits you'll receive when you subscribe:

Guaranteed electric cost savings

No upfront costs

Cancel any time without fee or penalty

No changes to your utility service -- you'll receive credits on your utility bill, and pay 90% of that value to PowerMarket (think gift card for energy)

Receive renewable energy certificates

This project is for everyone without rooftop solar - homeowners, renters, apartment tenants, local businesses, and more. Community solar is for the community, and we're here to guide you through the process. However, with Inyokern's solar project set to launch in July 2024, spots are limited! You can join this Inyokern Community Solar project by clicking "Sign Up" here: <https://dimension.powermarket.io/cadm.html>

Our mission is simple: to make clean energy more accessible, affordable, and widespread. Have questions? Learn more at: <https://dimension.powermarket.io/cadm.html> or contact us directly at (661) 443-0452 and dimension@powermarket.io.

information provided by member



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Indigenous Home & Garden



High Desert Fitness



Hyla Nursery

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February Member Visits



Guide Dogs for the Blind Ridgecrest Puppy Raising Club



Historical Society of the UMD



Grace Lutheran



Ridgecrest Hypnosis Center



P.A.C.T



Business After Hours at Bernie's Landscaping



Decanter Lounge Ribbon Cutting






Join us

7:30-9:00am
March 7

 CHAMBER Coffee Club

Coffee & Conversation @ the Chamber Office

FEEL CONFIDENT AT WORK



JOIN THE HR ADVANTAGE:
Tools for Thriving Organizations

Next class is March 20.
Seating is limited, register today!

 Meith
presented by OPERATIONAL SOLUTIONS

March 21 @ 5:30pm

Business After Hours

MIXER & NETWORKING

Host: **China Lake Museum**
Location: **130 E. Las Flores**

presented by Ridgecrest Chamber 

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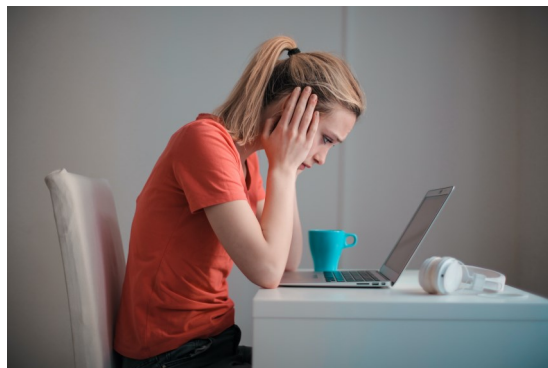
How State Cannabis Laws Affect Testing, Questions About Use

By Matthew Roberts - February 16, 2024

I've heard California law protects employees who use cannabis. Is it true that we can no longer test for, or discipline, an employee who tests positive for cannabis at the workplace?

Although it is true that in the past two years California has enacted laws that change how employers may address cannabis use in the workplace, employers still are permitted to take appropriate steps to enforce a drug-free workplace policy.

Those steps include testing applicants and employees, and disciplining employees for possession of, use of or impairment from any drugs, including cannabis.



Offsite, After-Hours Cannabis Use

Enacted in 2022 and effective on January 1, 2024, AB 2188 added a new protected class to the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) prohibiting employers from refusing to hire, disciplining, terminating or otherwise discriminating against an applicant or employee simply because they use cannabis offsite and away from the workplace. The new law makes clear, however, that employers may continue to prohibit possession of, or impairment by, cannabis while on the job.

In basic terms, this means employers may continue to enforce their drug-free workplace policies as it pertains to cannabis, with a new wrinkle. Drug-free policies generally call for drug testing employees as permitted under the law.

In most cases in California, that means conducting drug tests upon a reasonable suspicion that an employee is impaired at the worksite after observing objective signs such as odors emanating from the employee, slurred speech, lethargy, or bloodshot eyes.

AB 2188 does not prohibit reasonable suspicion testing for cannabis use; however, it does change the type of testing to which employers may subject their employees.

Under the new law, employers may no longer utilize testing that screens for nonpsychoactive cannabis metabolites. In this view, it generally is understood that employers must utilize saliva tests for active impairment since the chemicals causing impairment have not been metabolized in the saliva.

This testing restriction extends to preemployment drug testing as well. Similar to employee drug testing, AB 2188 does not alter an employer's ability to require that an applicant successfully complete a preemployment drug screening for cannabis. Again, however, the employer is limited to utilizing only testing that does not screen for nonpsychoactive cannabis metabolites.

Because AB 2188 does not expressly authorize any form of testing, employers are strongly encouraged to consult legal counsel about the best course of action for cannabis screening.

Preemployment Cannabis Inquiries

As a follow-up to AB 2188, in 2023 California enacted SB 700, also effective on January 1, 2024, to prohibit preemployment inquiries into an applicant's prior cannabis use.

For example, employers may not request information about cannabis use on a job application or in an interview. Further, unless otherwise permitted by law, an employer may not consider prior cannabis use obtained from a criminal history report.

Exceptions

Both AB 2188 and SB 700 are subject to a few exceptions. Employers who are in the building and construction trades are exempted from both laws.

Unfortunately, there is no definition whatsoever as to what it means to be in the "building and construction trades." Employers who believe they may fall into that vague and broad category are encouraged to consult with counsel before assuming that the exception applies to their organization.

The second exception applies to applicants or employees hired for positions that required a federal government background investigation or security clearance in accordance with U.S. Department of Defense regulations or other equivalent regulations applicable to other federal agencies.

Lastly, the law states it does not preempt, or override, other state and federal laws that require applicants or employees to be tested for controlled substances.

Column based on questions asked by callers on the Labor Law Helpline, a service to California Chamber of Commerce preferred members and above. For expert explanations of labor laws and Cal/OSHA regulations, not legal counsel for specific situations, call (800) 348-2262 or submit your question at www.hrcalifornia.com.



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The China Lake Museum Foundation



*-Honoring the Past
- Educating Today
- Building for the Future*

22nd Annual Dinner & Auction

Saturday, May 18, 2024 at 3:30 pm
Kerr McGee Center

\$65 Per Person - \$110 Per Couple

Early Bird Special: Purchase Tickets on or before April 20th

\$ 60.00 Per Person - \$90.00 Per Couple

\$300 Sponsor Seating for 2

\$1,200 Family/Small Business Table for 8

\$2,500 Corporate Table for 8

If unable to attend a tax deductible donation is appreciated

*Send Donations to or Purchase Tickets at
China Lake Museum*

*130 E. Las Flores Ave., Ridgecrest, CA 93555
or phone (760) 677-2866*

Come One, Come All – Community Invited

(CLMF Membership Not Required)

Program Ad Sponsors

\$600 Full Page

\$350 1/2 Page

\$200 1/4 Page

\$75 Business Card

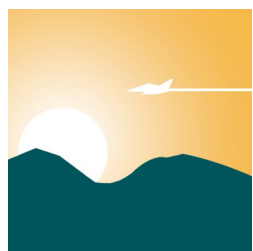
**Live Auction
Silent Auction
Raffles**

(Winners must be present)



**Auction and Raffle
Donations Needed**

The China Lake Museum Foundation is incorporated in the State of California as a non-profit foundation for educational purposes. The Foundation is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a charitable organization as described in Section 501(c)(3). Tax ID #77-0340083. www.chinalakemuseum.org



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Denny Kline

Kern Citizens for Energy

Desert Empire Fairgrounds & Event Center

Kevin Chambers Insurance Agency
Inc- Farmers Insurance

Dosen Real Estate

Meith Operational Solutions

Earth Landscaping


Ridgecrest Hypnosis Center

EZ Rentals and Sales

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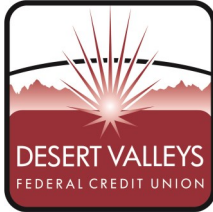
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Liberty Ambulance

MWR (Morale Welfare & Rec.)

Oliver Law

Opportunities For Learning

PG&E

Power Market

Primerica

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Saalex Solutions

Sienna Wellness Institute

Sierra Sands Unified School District

Southern California Edison

Southern Inyo Healthcare District

T-Mobile

Toyota of Ridgecrest